

Ground-Mounted Solar Projects - Summary

The information below pertains to ground-mounted solar projects only.
Structure-mounted solar projects generally do not require review by Regional Planning.
 Consult with Building & Safety for details.

Permitted with a Site Plan Review if:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is a "small-scale" solar energy system (i.e. energy used primarily on-site), AND The property is not zoned O-S or W.
Permitted with a Minor CUP if:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is a "small-scale" solar energy system (i.e. energy used primarily on-site), AND A modification to development standards is being requested; OR The property is zoned O-S or W.
Permitted with a CUP if:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is a "utility-scale" solar energy facility (energy used primarily off-site), AND The property is zoned A-2, C-H, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-M, C-R, C-MJ, C-RU, MXD-RU, MXD, M-1, M-1.5, M-2, R-R, or IT.
Prohibitions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground-mounted utility-scale solar facilities are prohibited in Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs), and in all zones other than those listed above. Concentrated solar thermal collectors that use lenses or mirrors to focus or reflect a large area of sunlight onto a small area.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS for SMALL-SCALE SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

Maximum Lot Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of lot or 2.5 acres, whichever is lesser (including all accessory structures). Additional requirements apply for modifications.
Maximum Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 feet

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS for UTILITY-SCALE SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES

Maximum Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 feet
Landscaped Buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 10-foot landscaped area along any facility perimeter fencing, and between such fencing and any public right-of-way or adjacent property with existing residential or agricultural use. Required findings for approval include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required vegetation along facility perimeter fencing must be sufficient to provide a buffer from adjacent residential and agricultural uses so as to provide a natural visual transition between the project and its surroundings; Vegetation must sufficiently provide such buffer and ground cover in a timely manner to the satisfaction of a County biologist. Additional project conditions also apply, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping existing, non-invasive, drought-tolerant vegetation approved by County biologist; Landscaped area must incorporate a variety of design elements, including plants and hardscape, which does not adversely affect drainage patterns.
Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural zones: Minimum 30 feet. All non-agricultural zones: As provided in base zone.
Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perimeter fencing is required and must comply with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum height 8 feet; Not located within 15 feet of a public right-of-way (may be located within required setback area); Incorporate small animal-permeable design.
Site Disturbance (Grading, Dust Control)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of existing vegetation root systems is prohibited except where necessary (existing vegetation may be mowed). Project must be designed so disturbance/grading is limited to only access roads, substations and related underground transmission lines, tanks, basins, inverter pads, or other areas required by the County. Water use conservation and monitoring requirements also apply.
Transmission Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underground transmission lines required (on-site and off-site) to the satisfaction of Regional Planning and Public Works, except where above-ground is required, such as over the California Aqueduct.
Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One project identification sign required at each temporary or permanent ingress or egress point. Sign(s) must be pole-mounted, and include owner and emergency contact information.

Please turn over for more information*Revised_ 03/2019*

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other signs permitted other than safety, directional, and warning signs as required by the Code (Chapter 22.114 - Signs).
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the Rural Outdoor Lighting District (ROLD), outdoor lighting must comply with following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited to that required for safety and security; ○ Shielded and directed downward to avoid light trespass; ○ Include motion sensors for entry-lighting to the on-site equipment, structures, and buildings; ○ All other ROLD requirements also apply.
Glare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize reflective glare toward any habitable structure on adjacent properties and adjacent streets through design and location.
Significant Ridgelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 50 vertical feet and 50 horizontal feet from any significant ridgeline identified in the General Plan or in applicable Community Standards District (CSD), as measured from the highest point.

AREA-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Community Standards Districts (CSDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small-scale: New Renewable Energy Ordinance (REO) development standards apply (i.e. supercede those of zone or supplemental district (CSD)) • Utility-scale: More restrictive provision applies (except height of perimeter fences, where new REO standard applies).
Coastal Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must comply with applicable Local Coastal Plan.
Military Operations or Airport Influence Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of Minor CUP and CUP, appropriate agencies are consulted and comments considered by decision-maker.

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